

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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LARGE TURKEY CROP IN PROSPECT

Farmers are raising 41,107,000 turkeys this year, 29 percent more than last year, according to a preliminary estimate of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

This is the second largest crop of record, being exceeded only by the 1945 crop of 44 million birds. This year's large crop follows three years of sharp decreases -- 8 percent in 1946, 14 percent in 1947 and 9 percent in 1948. Growers in 1948 enjoyed a seller's market. Turkeys were in short supply and prices obtained were the highest of record.

Feed prices began to decline in May 1948 and by the spring of 1949 feed prices were cheaper than a year earlier, by more than a dollar per 100 pounds. These conditions brought about renewed interest in turkey production, attracting newcomers to the industry as well as the "in-and-out" producers who were out of the turkey business in 1948. The newcomers are generally beginning on a small scale. They are, nevertheless, one of the factors responsible for the heavy death losses of poults this year. Most of the States report a loss much heavier than last year's light losses and heavier than average. The larger producers tended to hold their operations to a relatively small increase. Demand for poults continued strong through the entire hatching season ending in June.

All States are producing a larger turkey crop than a year ago, ranging from an increase of 3 percent in New York to 121 percent in Arkansas. California, the leading turkey State, has the largest crop of record. Increases by regions were 38 percent in the South Central States, 36 percent in the West North Central, 35 percent in the South Atlantic, 26 percent in the Western, 25 percent in the East North Central, and 10 percent in the North Atlantic States.

The 1949 season began with 33 percent more breeder hens on farms. The hatching season started early and continued strong through June. Sufficient hatching eggs were available to meet demands. Hatcheries reporting operations this season produced 58 percent more poults than in 1948. These hatcheries produced about one-third of the total number of poults hatched in 1949. Figures on hatchery poult production are published as reported and are not official estimates of the size of the crop. As an indication of turkeys raised, the death loss of poults and the percentage of poult crop produced in hatcheries must be considered. Both these factors show year-to-year variations. Poult losses are mainly influenced by management and weather and show an up-and-down relationship to these factors. On the other hand, commercial hatcheries year after year are producing a larger and larger percentage of the total poult crop. In years like 1949, when a large number of beginners are entering the field, the percentage of the poult crop produced by hatcheries increases sharply. Compared with last year, hatcheries reporting showed an increase in hatchings of 69 percent in March, 43 percent in April, 48 percent in May, and 45 percent in June. In February, usually a relatively light month for hatching, the output was three times as large as a year earlier.

Farmers have exceeded by 4 percent their February intentions to produce a crop 25 percent larger than last year.

EARLY MARKETINGS EXPECTED

Growers, if they carry out their February intentions, will market about 25.7 percent of their ^{crop} in October or earlier. Last year growers indicated in early August that they expected to market 23 percent of their birds during the period, but actually sold 19.5 percent. Last year, however, turkey prices were on an upward trend, giving growers an incentive to hold back on marketings. This year prices have been on a downward trend, so that early marketings may possibly exceed intentions. Aside from price considerations, there has been a steady trend toward earlier marketings, because flocks of early birds are less liable to storm losses, are easier to raise and have smaller death losses.

Turkey growers expect to market 38.1 percent of their crop in November, compared with the 40.1 percent marketed in November last year. Marketings to the end of November are expected to be about 63.8 percent of the crop, compared with 59.6 percent last year. This year's intended marketings in December and January or later, of 28.5 percent and 7.7 percent, respectively, are well below last year's marketings of 31.2 percent and 9.2 percent, respectively, for these months.

In 1949 if growers intentions are realized and farm consumption is about average, the number marketed would be about 10.3 million birds in October or earlier, 15.3 million in November, 11.5 million in December and 3.1 million in January or later. Last year's 6.1 million turkeys were marketed in October or earlier, 12.4 million were sold in November, 9.7 million in December, and 2.9 million in January or later. The 1943-47 average number of turkeys marketed was 6.6 million in October or earlier, 14.2 million in November, 11.5 million in December, and 4.6 million in January or later. Production of early turkeys is increasing in all regions of the country. Intended marketing of the 1949 crop in October or earlier, by regions, are 37 percent in the West North Central States, 30 percent in the South Atlantic, 27 percent in the Western, 17 percent in North Atlantic, 16 percent in the East North Central and 14 percent in the South Central States.

The United States Department of Agriculture has announced a program for the support of producer prices of live turkeys at a national average price of about 31 cents a pound.

PROPORTION OF TURKEY CROP MARKETING IN DIFFERENT MONTHS

(Reporters' averages)

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS	1948 Crop				1949 Crop (intended)			
	: Oct. or: : earlier:	: Nov. :	: Dec. :	: later :	: Jan. or: : earlier:	: Nov. :	: Dec. :	: later :
	P e r c e n t							
N. Atlantic	11.0	45.1	37.0	6.9	16.7	41.0	33.7	8.6
E.N. Central	13.9	45.1	35.9	5.1	16.1	44.7	33.3	5.9
W.N. Central	32.2	40.6	21.8	5.4	37.4	37.8	21.6	3.2
S. Atlantic	21.3	38.3	31.7	8.7	29.6	34.3	29.9	6.2
S. Central	6.5	39.3	39.6	14.6	13.8	39.0	35.0	12.2
Western	19.0	36.5	31.5	13.0	27.0	35.4	27.0	10.6
United States	19.5	40.1	31.2	9.2	25.7	38.1	28.5	7.7

The following table on United States marketing of turkeys for the years 1940 through 1949 shows clearly the trend toward early marketings. The October or earlier marketings show a fairly consistent upward trend from the 8.8 percent of the crop for 1940 to 25.7 percent in 1949.

PROPORTION OF UNITED STATES TURKEY
CROP MARKETING IN DIFFERENT MONTHS
(Reporters' averages)

Year	Oct. or earlier	November	December	Jan. or later
	Percent			
1949 ^{1/}	25.7	38.1	28.5	7.7
1948	19.5	40.1	31.2	9.2
1947	19.8	40.5	32.1	7.6
1946	22.3	36.7	28.4	12.6
1945	19.6	36.4	30.0	14.0
1944	16.6	38.7	30.9	13.8
1943	10.1	41.1	35.2	13.6
1942	11.8	41.1	36.3	10.8
1941	8.5	39.8	38.9	12.8
1940	8.8	42.1	36.9	12.2

^{1/} Marketing intentions for 1949.

TURKEYS RAISED ON FARMS 1949, WITH COMPARISONS

State and Division	Number Raised					
	Average	1946	1947	1948	Indicated	1949 as %
	1936-45			1/	1949 2/	of 1948
	Thousands					Percent
Me.	48	51	50	37	48	130
N.H.	61	75	73	61	69	113
Vt.	131	174	137	100	121	121
Mass.	254	333	316	307	335	109
R.I.	25	33	33	31	34	110
Conn.	124	212	178	178	206	116
N.Y.	446	756	741	763	786	103
N.J.	171	405	364	328	410	125
Pa.	868	1,431	1,317	1,264	1,378	109
N. ATL.	2,129	3,470	3,209	3,069	3,387	110
Ohio	844	1,155	1,213	1,031	1,237	120
Ind.	474	1,081	919	919	1,241	135
Ill.	588	1,152	1,129	1,016	1,118	110
Mich.	544	932	867	780	1,014	130
Wis.	450	614	491	442	606	137
E. N. CENT.	2,901	4,934	4,619	4,189	5,216	125
Minn.	2,872	4,019	3,537	2,759	3,752	136
Iowa	1,809	3,208	2,566	1,899	2,659	140
Mo.	1,386	1,746	1,310	1,310	1,572	120
N.Dak.	1,225	926	833	500	825	165
S.Dak.	870	421	295	206	288	140
Nebr.	846	970	873	716	931	130
Kans.	967	896	663	530	742	140
W. N. CENT.	9,975	12,186	10,077	7,920	10,769	136
Del.	104	91	68	61	70	115
Md.	411	466	396	321	417	130
Va.	861	1,331	1,131	1,221	1,526	125
W.Va.	268	437	398	498	682	137
N.C.	256	421	379	360	486	135
S.C.	201	420	357	446	714	160
Ga.	130	182	182	187	299	160
Fla.	111	115	109	109	125	115
S. ATL.	2,342	3,463	3,020	3,203	4,319	135
Ky.	302	220	165	173	216	125
Tenn.	185	175	140	140	182	130
Ala.	143	151	128	122	146	120
Miss.	120	85	72	76	95	125
Ark.	124	129	85	70	155	221
La.	58	48	51	46	58	127
Okla.	1,204	652	522	365	456	125
Tex.	4,023	4,231	3,681	3,018	4,225	140
S. CENT.	6,158	5,691	4,844	4,010	5,533	138
Mont.	232	170	119	113	130	115
Idaho	274	239	191	141	268	190
Wyo.	209	156	131	118	124	105
Colo.	854	900	702	562	759	135
N.Mex.	71	88	94	94	103	110
Ariz.	82	87	71	50	60	120
Utah	1,092	1,332	1,039	1,049	1,343	128
Nev.	51	46	37	30	32	105
Wash.	861	1,303	1,121	1,065	1,118	105
Oreg.	1,859	2,049	1,639	1,475	1,593	108
Calif.	3,521	4,610	4,057	4,706	6,353	135
WEST.	9,106	10,980	9,201	9,403	11,883	126
U.S.	32,611	40,724	34,970	31,793	41,107	129

1/ Revised. 2/ Preliminary estimates as of August 1, 1949.